remains that in practice there has been much of religious toleration in China. Just why this is so must be in part conjectural.

It may have been because the practically minded Chinese have been eager to take advantage of every possible benefit from each of the systems which have come to their attention. It may have been because of a fundamental religious uncertainty—a lurking suspicion that all religions are at least in part false and a lack of confidence in the finality of any one of them—and yet a fear that each may possess elements of truth. It may have been, too, because of the desire to build a mankind-embracing culture, and of the concomitant talent for absorbing other cultures. It seems probable, for example, that many of the divinities which now appear purely indigenous were taken over from other peoples as these were conquered and assimilated.

Still another characteristic of Chinese religious life has been its optimism. There is little of the despair of human existence, of the pessimism about the worth of human life, and of the desire to be rid of personality which one finds in much of Indian thought. This is in spite of the fact that Buddhism, so influential in China, was originally a means of getting rid of desire, and, in the eyes of many interpreters, of the separate entities called persons. It is significant that in Chinese Buddhism nirvana, as a place where desire is at last extinguished, has largely dropped into the background and that heaven and hell, where separate personal existences are pictured as continuing, loom large in popular Buddhist teaching. This optimism, too, is seen in the discussions about the basic quality of human nature which have been prominent in the

history of Chinese philosophy. Orthodox Confucianism declares men to be by nature good. Even those who, like Hsiin Tzii, have denied the truth of this contention have usually regarded human nature as improvable. There is, too, a certain confidence in the moral trustworthiness of the universe. Some have regarded the universe as beyond human understanding and as indifferent to the fate of men, either collectively or as individuals. Others have held that the universe moves according to unvarying law and that nothing like a personal God is at the heart of it. In the main, however, orthodox Confucianism has taught that moral law is part of the essence of things, that when men obey it prosperity ensues and that evil-doing is a cause of calamities. To this con-